

Old Mystic Fire District

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Pertinent Facts for Local Fire Departments

Following is the cost to a local volunteer fire department to train and equip a new member to the basic level required to respond to emergencies:

Fire Fighter I Class	\$600.00
Emergency Medical Responder Class	<u>\$350.00</u>
Total Training Costs	\$950.00
Required Physical	\$250.00
Cost for Personal Protective Equipment	<u>\$2500.00</u>
Total investment for the department	\$3700.00

Last year 607 firefighters tested for Firefighter I Certification in the State of Connecticut. Total funds spent on this training by local fire departments were \$364,200.

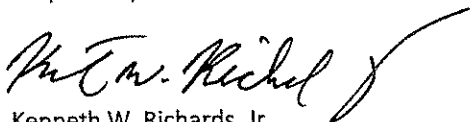
I called some local volunteer departments in my area this morning and their training budgets ranged from \$2500 to a high of \$7000. If you do the simple math this provides basic training for 2 to 7 new members. Keep in mind that the same budget has to provide refresher training and other required training to the entire membership.

The Firefighter One training account at the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control refunds local departments for half of the cost of the class (up to \$300). If this line item is zeroed out of the budget it will have far reaching effects on local fire departments.

The amount of local tax dollars that volunteer firefighters save taxpayers must be taken into consideration when looking at cutting budgets that will directly affect these local fire departments. In Old Mystic, if we lost the volunteer side of the department and had to hire a fully paid career staff, it would double the Mill rate for the taxpayers, while providing only minimal coverage of 4 firefighters on duty. Compare this to having 35 active volunteers and 5 career staff—as it stands now, the average volunteer response in Old Mystic is 8-10 members for the average call and 20-25 members for any major response, so this would be a significant loss in public safety to the tax payers.

The account for *Responses to Limited Access Highways*, which subsidizes volunteer departments for highway response, has been a target of budget cuts for years. Old Mystic responded to 61 emergency calls on I-95 in 2010. These calls range from minor accidents with spills to major accidents that tie up resources for hours. To handle many of the emergencies on the highway, we have a fully equipped heavy rescue truck that is worth over 1 million dollars. The funds we receive from this account do not even come close to the amount of money we spend on fuel and wear and tear on apparatus. The \$652 we received this year divided by the 61 calls is \$10.69 per call on the highway. Keep in mind that each call on the average requires a minimum of two pieces of fire apparatus, 8- 10 members and a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour for most calls.

Respectfully,



Kenneth W. Richards, Jr.
Fire Chief/Fire Marshal

Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association

Position statement on State Agency Restructuring

The Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association membership consists of Chief Fire Officers from over 300 career, volunteer, and combination fire departments within Connecticut and serves to act as a unified voice for Connecticut's Fire Chiefs. To that end, the Association membership acknowledges the gravity of the current fiscal crisis facing the State of Connecticut, which is driving the Governor's agency consolidation recommendations.

Furthermore, the Association acknowledges the consolidation proposal concerning the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC). Given this proposal, the Association offers the following irreducible values as critical to the fire service regarding consolidation of the CFPC and regional fire schools with any other agency:

1. The Connecticut Fire Academy shall remain, and this Academy shall provide technical assistance, consulting, information sharing and training resources to the fire and emergency services community, and raise fire and life safety awareness among the public.
2. The Fire Service must have equal representation on any proposed combined emergency services Board of Commissioners.
3. Coordination of the state-wide fire rescue disaster response plan shall continue. A Fire Liaison position at the Statewide Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) shall be maintained.
4. The Fire Service shall be represented by a high-level, full time Fire Administrator. This individual shall have a significant background in the fire service.
5. There shall be a centralized organization to include regional facilities to administer fire service training, certification, accreditation, and compliance with state and national fire service training standards.
6. Funding and collaboration of the regional fire schools shall continue to be administered through the centralized organization.
7. Certification of firefighters, Candidate Physical Ability Testing (CPAT) and the Recruit Firefighter Training Program, shall continue to be administered and funded by a statewide training organization.

Respectfully,



Kenneth W. Richards, Jr.

President

Joint Council of Fire Services Organizations

Position statement on State Agency Restructuring

The Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations membership consists of the following associations: Connecticut State Firefighters, Connecticut Fire Marshals, Connecticut Fire Chiefs, Connecticut Fire Department Instructors, Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs, Connecticut Fire Equipment Mechanics and the Uniformed Professional Firefighters of Connecticut. The council represents approximately 28,000 fire service professionals from career, volunteer and combination fire service agencies in the state of Connecticut and serves to act as a unified voice for Connecticut fire services. To that end, the Joint Council membership acknowledges the gravity of the current fiscal crisis facing the State of Connecticut, which is driving the Governor's agency consolidation recommendations.

Furthermore, the Joint Council acknowledges the consolidation proposal concerning the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC). Given this proposal, the council offers the following irreducible values as critical to the fire service regarding consolidation of the CFPC and regional fire schools with any other agency:

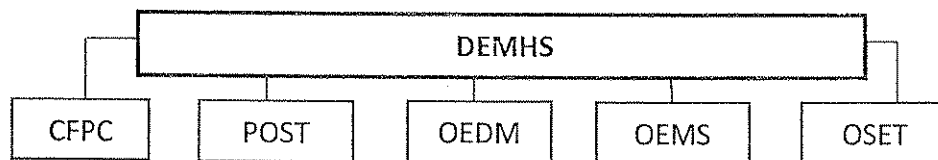
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As an organization, we would like to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. We respectfully request that the Public Safety Committee and the Joint Council meet to have an open discussion on what consolidated agencies would best serve the people of Connecticut regarding emergency services. We believe a collaboration of experience and knowledge from both bodies could potentially produce a better agency, one which will in turn better serve the intent of overall savings of tax dollars and streamlining the way we do business to better serve the people of Connecticut.

We would like to propose and begin discussions on the following model with your committee:

Make the Department of Emergency Management and Home Land Security (DEMHS) the parent agency of the:

- Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC)
- Police Officers Standards Training Council (POST)
- Office of Education and Data Management (OEDM)
- Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS)
- Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET)



All of the above agencies have common responsibilities in training, certification, accreditation and compliance with State and National standards. With this consolidation there will be some learning curves and bumps in the road, however we believe that the end result will meet the Governor's goals and give the people of the State of Connecticut a new agency that will provide the training and support to the emergency responders that they depend on when they dial 911.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. We look forward to hearing from you with proposed meeting dates to start working out the details of this proposal.

Respectfully,

Kenneth W. Richards, Jr.
Chairperson